



# News Release

Timothy Jeffries, Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **DES Announces Bureau Chief of Adult Protective Services**

*Promotes 10-year APS colleague to continue care for most vulnerable*

**PHOENIX** – Director Jeffries today announced the promotion of Heather Patnode to Bureau Chief of Adult Protective Services (APS). Ms. Patnode has worked diligently for 10 years serving Arizona’s vulnerable adults as an investigator, supervisor, and district program manager.

“Heather has been deeply involved with our APS strategic planning process and the evaluation of open cases,” said Director Tim Jeffries. “Her experience in protecting vulnerable adults and success in evaluating and eliminating our active caseload has been extremely beneficial.”

“Heather is a passionate leader who has a heart for the APS program, which is reflected in the strong support she provides her team,” said Lynn Larson, Assistant Director of the Division of Aging and Adult Services. “She engages our stakeholders in strengthening the APS program and is highly respected in the community.”

Earlier this year, APS investigators were faced with a crisis that demanded immediate attention and resolution. Over the past five years, the number of APS reports has grown by 79 percent. To provide the most responsive and thorough assessment, the State’s APS caseload goal is 40 urban and 30 rural cases per investigator. For State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2015, the average caseload per investigator was 139 statewide, 70 for rural and 172 for urban.

Governor Doug Ducey and members of the Arizona legislature agreed APS caseworkers needed more support. To address this need for additional staff, \$3.0M was added to the SFY 2015 budget to better manage caseload growth. The SFY 2016 budget also includes \$1.2M to support additional caseload growth. The hiring process is continuing for the 2016 fiscal year, with 104 out of 108 senior investigator positions filled, 17 of the 18 entry-level investigators hired, and 34 contractors currently on board.

Prudent progress is being made on open cases while upholding our commitment to quality and safety. In March of this year, there were a total of 12,676 open or active cases requiring review. As of today, November 13, the number of open cases has been reduced to 5,487 cases. With support expanded via the hiring process and utilization of the 4DX, 4 Disciplines of Execution from FranklinCovey, Arizonans are being better protected and APS staff is better supported.

“Congratulations to Heather and the amazing APS staff in achieving this accomplishment,” added Jeffries. “Through this process, you have not only proven yourselves to be passionate and dedicated to your profession, but you’ve surely saved lives in the process. Your efforts are truly commendable.”

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There are many ways to make a report if you feel someone is in need. Reports can be made by phone by calling toll-free: 1-877-SOS ADULT (1-877-767-2385) Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. *Individuals with hearing disabilities can use the telecommunications device for the deaf: (TDD): 1-877-815-8390.* Trained staff are able to take anonymous reports over the telephone.

Reports can also be made online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at <https://www.azdes.gov/reportadultabuse/>. For emergency situations, call 9-1-1 immediately. The APS Intake Form can also be downloaded in English or Spanish and faxed to (602) 277-4984.

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